

27 May 2022

To: Principals, Subject Advisors, Parents, Teachers, Departmental Heads, and Library Information Services (LIS) Coordinators.

Topic: Rebooting learning by creating inclusive curricular reading activities.

Message Objectives are to:

- Establish ways of encouraging reading in homes to help learners/grasp concepts faster.
- Promote reading for meaning through various reading activities.

Annually the African Union (AU) commemorates International Africa Day on the 25th of May in commemoration of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity which was founded on this day in 1963. In South Africa, this day is a reminder of South Africa's relationship with the continent as it was largely severed during the apartheid era. Since South Africa is a country with diverse cultures from all over the continent, it is important that schools and communities make use of this opportunity to accelerate the pace of improving reading. Research indicates that learners learn best if they understand their Mother Tongue better. Taking lessons learned from commemorating days such as Africa Day, schools, and parents in homes can assist in rebooting the learning of children by creating an inclusive curriculum. This exercise requires parents to receive constant guidance from the teachers at the schools where their children attend.

Creating an inclusive curriculum means acknowledging that learners learn in various ways, at different rates, and have diverse interests. It means that different resources are brought together to allow learners greater access to the curriculum and more successful learning outcomes.

Here are some tips to help teachers design an inclusive language programme.

- An inclusive language arts programme begins with recognising that children learn to read at different rates and at different times. To support this reading development, a variety of books are available for the children to read during lessons and unstructured time.
- When possible, inclusive classrooms *integrate* technology into the language arts curriculum. This means that technology is not just used to demonstrate a new idea or skill (ie. watching a movie on a television monitor), but it is used to facilitate and support different learning styles (ie. a text to speech program for children with learning disabilities).
- A graphic organizer is a visual tool that is used to organize ideas, express knowledge, create relationships and allow users to communicate. Taking information out of text and putting it into graphic organizers allows learners to actively work with concepts for greater understanding.
- Allowing learners to have a choice in what and how they read, facilitates more enthusiasm and engagement in learning. Learners can be given the opportunity to choose their own books for not only personal enjoyment but for curriculum as well. They can be given choice in how they show their understanding of the book or even how they share the book with others. There can also be a choice in the reading strategies that the learner uses to understand the text.

From: Bailey Nkuna (bailey@nect.org.za)